

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
San Luis Valley Field Office
46525 Highway 114
Saguache, CO 81212**

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-300-2013-0011-CX

PROJECT NAME: Notice of Competitive Auction for Solar Energy Development on Public Lands in the State of Colorado

PLANNING UNIT: San Luis Valley Field Office

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: De Tilla Gulch and Los Mogotes East Solar Energy Zones

APPLICANT: Bureau Land Management

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION: The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Colorado State Office will accept competitive bids to select a preferred applicant to submit a right-of-way (ROW) application and a plan of development for solar energy projects on approximately 3,705 acres of public land in Saguache and Conejos counties, Colorado. The BLM will utilize a bidding process to identify a preferred applicant this process is considered a procedural process and is thusly categorically excluded because it is "of an administrative, financial, legal, technical, or procedural nature; or whose environmental effects are too broad, speculative, or conjectural to lend themselves to meaningful analysis and will later be subject to the NEPA process, either collectively or case-by-case." 43 CFR 46.210(i)

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW: This proposed action is listed as a Categorical Exclusion in DOI Departmental Manual Part 516 Chapter 11 (1.10). None of the following exceptions in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2, apply.

Exclusion Criteria	YES	NO
1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; lands with wilderness characteristics; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands; floodplains; national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		X
3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.		X
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects		X

or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		
5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
7. Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.		X
8. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		X
9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations.		X
11. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites.		X
12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species.		X

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM REVIEW			
NAME	TITLE	AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY	Initials/date
Paul Tigan	Assistant Field Office Manager	SLVFO	8/14/13
Joseph Vieria	Project Manager	RET	8/14/13
Nancy Keohane	NEPA Coordinator	RET NEPA	8/14/13
Jeff Brown	Realty Specialist	RET Realty	8/14/13
Leon Montoya	Realty Specialist	SLVFO Realty	8/14/13
Martin Weimer	NEPA Coordinator	Front Range District	8/14/13

REMARKS:

Cultural Resources: Not applicable for bid process but will later be subject to the NEPA analysis

Native American Religious Concerns: Not applicable for bid process but will later be subject to the NEPA analysis

Threatened and Endangered Species: Not applicable for bid process but will later be subject to the NEPA analysis

NAME OF PREPARER: Nancy Keohane, Renewable Energy Team, NEPA Specialist

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Nancy Keohane, Renewable Energy Team, NEPA Specialist

DATE: 7/23/13

DECISION AND RATIONALE: I have reviewed this Categorical Exclusion and have decided to implement the Proposed Action.

This action is listed in the Department Manual as an action that may be categorically excluded. I have evaluated the action relative to the 10 criteria listed above and have determined that it does not represent an exception and is, therefore, categorically excluded from further environmental analysis.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: /s/ Andrew Archuleta
Andrew Archuleta, Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 8/16/13